

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENNA 9927

MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: UK PAPER ON EXCLUSION OF
AIR FORCES

UK REP (AMB. ROSE) PASSED OUT TO AD HOC GROUP MEETING ON
30 NOVEMBER, A PAPER PREPARED BY UK DELEGATION ON "AIR
FORCES: THE ARGUMENTS FOR EXCLUSION FROM REDUCTIONS."
THE AHG AGREED TO STUDY IT AND CONSIDER IT LATER. A NUMBER
OF SIMILAR POINTS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN INCLUDED IN THE WORKING
GROUP DRAFT OF A PLENARY PRESENTATION TO BE MADE ON DEC
6. IF WASHINGTON AGENCIES BELIEVE THAT ADDITIONAL
OR AMENDED ARGUMENTS WILL BE HELPFUL IN SUPPORT OF THE ALLIED
POSITION WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING THEM FOR
DISCUSSION IN AD HOC GROUP.

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BEGIN TEXT

AIR FORCES: THE ARGUMENTS FOR EXCLUSION FROM REDUCTIONS

THE EASTERN PROPOSALS FOR REDUCTIONS INCLUDE AIR AS WELL AS GROUND FORCES. SEVERAL OF THEIR SUBSEQUENT STATEMENTS, INCLUDING THE CZECH STATEMENT ON 15 NOVEMBER AND THE EAST GERMAN ON 20 NOVEMBER, HAVE CRITICISED THE WEST'S FAILURE TO INCLUDE AIR FORCES IN THE SCOPE OF OUR PROPOSALS. THEY HAVE BASED THEIR ARGUMENTS ON THREE POINTS:

A. CONCENTRATION ON GROUND FORCES IS CONTRARY TO THE COMMUNIQUE AFTER THE PREPARATORY CONSULTATIONS, WHICH DID NOT LIMIT THE FORCES AND ARMAMENTS TO BE ADDRESSED IN CENTRAL EUROPE.

B. FROM THE MILITARY POINT OF VIEW, ALL THE ARMED FORCES IN CENTRAL EUROPE, NATIONAL AND FOREIGN, GROUND AND AIR FORCES AND ARMAMENTS INCLUDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, REPRESENT TOGETHER ONE UNIFIED SYSTEM. THIS UNITY IS BASED ON THE CLOSE INTERACTION OF TROOPS OF ALL TYPES AND ARMS OF SERVICE. TO LIMIT REDUCTIONS TO ONE TYPE IS TO TRY TO OBTAIN A UNILATERAL MILITARY ADVANTAGE, CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLE OF UNDIMINISHED SECURITY.

C. REDUCING GROUND FORCES ALONE WOULD INCREASE THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF AIR FORCES (AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS), ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE WOULD BE NO PROVISION AGAINST AUGMENTING THEM.

2. IN OUR STATEMENTS IN PLENARY MEETINGS BEFORE THE CHRISTMAS RECESS IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THESE ARGUMENTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS WE COULD USE:

(A) OUR PROPOSALS ARE DESIGNED TO DEAL WITH THE DISPARITIES IN THE PRESENT SITUATION WITHIN THE AGREED AREA OF REDUCTIONS WHICH MAKE FOR INSTABILITY. IT IS IN GROUND FORCES THAT THE MAJOR DISPARITIES OCCUR. THIS IS WHY WE THINK IT RIGHT TO FOCUS ON THEM. OUR PROPOSALS THEREFORE ADDRESS GROUND FORCE MANPOWER, TAKING ACCOUNT OF COMBAT CAPABILITY.

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(B) THE CAPABILITIES OF AIR FORCES, UNLIKE GROUND FORCES, ARE LESS SUSCEPTIBLE TO MEASUREMENT IN MANPOWER TERMS. A REDUCTION IN AIR FORCE MANPOWER THEREFORE LESS RELEVANT TO AN ASSESSMENT OF THE COMBAT CAPABILITIES OF THE AIR FORCES ON EITHER SIDE. EVALUATION OF THESE CAPABILITIES WOULD REQUIRE A COMPLEX STUDY OF COMPARATIVE AIRCRAFT CHARACTERISTICS ON WHICH IT WOULD BE VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REACH AGREEMENT.

(C) MOREOVER A REDUCTION IN NUMBERS OF AIRCRAFT IN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS WOULD BE WITHOUT VALUE SINCE THE MOBILITY OF AIRCRAFT MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO RE-INTRODUCE THEM IN A MATTER OF HOURS.

(D) IT IS THEREFORE IMPOSSIBLE TO DEAL WITH AIRCRAFT WITHIN THE AREA OF REDUCTIONS WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THOSE STATIONED OUTSIDE. TO DO THIS WOULD EXTEND THE NEGOTIATIONS BEYOND THE AGREED AREA AND WOULD IMMENSELY COMPLICATE AND PROLONG THE NEGOTIATIONS.

(E) CLOSE SUPPORT OF THE LAND BATTLE IS ONLY ONE OF THE TASKS OF COMBAT AIRCRAFT. THEY HAVE MANY OTHERS, INCLUDING MARITIME ROLES. THUS AIRCRAFT POSITIONED IN CENTRAL EUROPE ARE CONCERNED WITH THE DEFENCE OF OTHER AREAS, WHILE AIRCRAFT POSITIONED OUTSIDE CENTRAL EUROPE MAY WELL AFFECT THE SECURITY SITUATION IN THE AREA.

(F) MOREOVER, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PREVENT THE CIRCUMVENTION OF ANY AGREEMENT TO REDUCE AIR FORCES, SINCE AIRCRAFT WITHDRAWN FROM CENTRAL EUROPE COULD STILL BE STATIONED WITHIN EASY OPERATIONAL OR FERRY RANGE OF THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES.

END TEXT. HUMES

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